

THE AMERICAN BOARD AND AMERICAN  
SLAVERY.

*Speech of*

SPEECH

*on  
Polity*

THEODORE TILTON,

IN

PLYMOUTH CHURCH, BROOKLYN,

January 28, 1860,

Reported by Wm. HENRY BURE.

NOTE.

At the late annual meeting of the Plymouth Church, Brook'yn, held at the beginning of the present year, a discussion arose, which was protracted to five evenings, respecting the use to be made of funds collected for Foreign Missions. The main question at issue was involved in the following resolution:

"Resolved, That this Church contribute no more money to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions."

The ground of this proposed discontinuance of contributions to the American Board was the alleged complicity of that corporation with the system of American Slavery, by sustaining slaveholding Mission Churches among the North American Indians.

On the fourth night of the debate, the pastor of the Church, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, made an address, two hours in length, maintaining—

"That the American Board was the proper depository of the contributions of Plymouth Church for Foreign Missions; that the Board had, to an unparalleled degree, kept pace with public sentiment on the subject of slavery; that it now held anti-slavery doctrines, and had faithfully and consistently applied these doctrines to missionary work; and that its record, on this whole subject, was clean, clear, and pure."

At the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Tilton obtained the floor for an immediate reply, but gave way, owing to the lateness of the hour, to a motion for adjournment; with the understanding that he should open the debate on the following evening. The general interest excited by the discussion drew together, on the closing night, an audience that crowded the large edifice in every part. Mr. Tilton's argument, in reply, is given in full in the following pages. At the close of its delivery, Mr. Beecher added a rejoinder, after which, the "previous question" was called, and the vote taken. The result was (for various reasons, not unexpectedly) a majority in favor of the American Board.

# SPEECH OF THEODORE TILTON.

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My very dear friend, to whose speech I now undertake to reply, was so frank and generous, last Monday evening, in his allusions to some of the young men of this Church, who, growing up for years under his teachings, had at last found themselves differing in certain points from their teacher, that I cannot but tarry a moment, at the threshold of my argument, to thank him for his kindness. I think, sir, you will agree with me, it was characteristic of the man. It was a fresh instance of that large-heartedness, that generosity, that warmth of nature that have won for him the admiration and affection not only of the young men of his Church, but of the old men—and not only of his Church, but everywhere. I remember reading of a nobleman of the Court of Queen Elizabeth, who thought it a sufficient honor to himself to be called “the friend of Sir Philip Sidney.” On very many occasions, both in private and in public, I have been received into new circles of society as the friend of the pastor of this Church; and I am sure that never in my life have I been more proud of any introduction! When Louis Kossuth called Walter Savage Landor his friend, the old poet lifted up his hands and exclaimed, “Henceforth, no man can honor me!” I need not say to any member of this Church that I love its minister, almost as I love no other man! Nor need I say that when I come to-night to speak in opposition to his views, it is from no lack of good-fellowship or

good feeling towards him ; for, standing in this pulpit, in the presence of this Church which has grown up under his labors and his prayers, I humbly now invoke upon him the blessing of God, and pray that he may be sustained with unabated strength in his noble and successful service in this Church of Jesus Christ, until, after many years, he shall be as old and white-haired as that venerable man, his father, who now, past four-score, has travelled up so near to the summit of the Mount of Vision that his head is already among its snows, waiting to break through into the glory beyond !

My friend's generous words, on Monday night, were of themselves a sufficient rebuke to those gentlemen who so privately, yet industriously, have labored to make it appear, to the minds of many on whose votes shall rest the decision of this debate, that when a young man in this Church ventures to speak a word in opposition to words spoken by the minister, the act is to be frowned upon as presumptuous and impertinent. I come to this platform because, having been a member of this Church for well nigh seven years, the teachings which I have received in this place, delivered from this desk, have led me hither by their own natural force. For I may truly say that I am indebted for my anti-slavery convictions to the instructions of the pastor of this Church. It is, therefore, Mr. Beecher's own strong right hand that has drawn me to the opposite side of this question ! I never have believed in the old dogma that the " king can do no wrong," nor will I believe in the newer dogma, which seems to prevail to a too great extent throughout the Church, that the "minister can say no wrong." Therefore I speak, and speak freely.

In the beginning, I beg to remind the audience that this discussion, although it be with respect to the disposition of collected funds, is nevertheless not one of money, but of principle. I say this to disabuse the mind of my friend, the Rev. Mr. Field, of *The Evangelist*, whom I met yesterday at dinner, and who proposed, as the easiest solution of our difficulties, that we should settle the

question by "dividing the money among the principal speakers!" (Laughter).

The main question—not the technical question, but the main question which underlies this discussion—the great illuminated background against which the present subject stands out in strong relief—is the system of American slavery and the relation which the American Church bears, and ought to bear, to it.

I need not, to-night, characterize with any new terms of condemnation that system which crushes down four millions of human beings, in this nation, to a level so low that other men's feet are set upon their necks! I will not draw any fresh picture of its horrors! It is enough to say that it is a system which denies to men their own manhood; that strikes down womanhood with despoiling lust; that lays violent hands on little children, disregarding every plea of pity; that sundering every sacred, domestic tie; that, with cruel oppression, crushes down God's children, and, in the moment of its cruelty, points to God's Word for precedent, and to God's Church for the protecting shadow of its spire! I call your attention to the fact that the American Church is in complicity with this system to an extent which you will scarcely credit when I give you the facts and figures. Listen a moment! I have an authentic table of statistics, from which it appears that the number of slaves owned by ministers and members of the Methodist Church is—how many do you think? Why, 219,000!

Mr. BEECHER—That is, I suppose, in the Methodist Church South?

Mr. TILTON—No, sir; in the Church South and North together; for both bold slaves. The number of slaves owned by ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church, Old School and New, is 77,000; by Baptists, 125,000; by Reformed Baptists (I don't think they are altogether reformed), 101,000; by Episcopalians, 88,000; by all other denominations (and I am glad that in the paper from which I read our own denomination is not put down by name), about 55,000; making altogether a sum

total of more than 600,000 human beings—men, women and children!—for whom the walls of the Christian Church are only a prison! Think of it! In this nineteenth century, after the gospel of Christianity has been for nearly two thousand years working its way into the hearts of men, the Church—claiming Christ as its founder, and attempting to lead men along the only way to the gate of Heaven—holds six hundred thousand human beings in personal and life-long bondage to its ministers and members! I do not wonder that Albert Barnes said, if it were not for the American Church, American slavery could not exist for an hour! You must remember, too, that this great multitude of slaves, held by church-members and church-ministers, are held everywhere under one and the same pretence. The universal plea is that “the circumstances are justifiable”! No slaveholder who communes with a Church will dare to open his mouth and say to the world that he holds his slaves as the mass of slave-owners outside the Church hold theirs. He denies that he keeps his human property for his selfish profit, and puts forth, instead, the miserable pretence that his oppression is meant for the slaves’ moral and religious instruction, and their highest spiritual good! Nothing is more common in the Church than the apology that slavery is a benign missionary institution!

Now, I wish this Church to aid in no way, not even by the smallest contribution, any Society or Board that is in complicity with this cruel system. I shall attempt to prove that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is at this moment in complicity with this wrong and crime. If I prove this, it will, of course, follow that this Church ought at once to sever its connection with this Board.

But, in the first place, allow me to express my surprise at the way in which my friend undertook to vindicate the American Board. One of his strong arguments—and it struck me with great astonishment!—was that this was a “venerable institution”! I say it struck me with astonishment; for I have heard him declare, in this very

pulpit, that he "would never be moved by reverence one step even towards the worship of God!" Nay, sir, standing in the presence of hoary institutions that have claimed honor on account of age, he has always exclaimed, "No! I have iron knees! I will not bow down!" And yet, on Monday night, he said, and repeated it again and again, "The American Board is a venerable institution!" Sir, what if it be venerable? It is not therefore sacred! My friend will pardon me if I say that when he offered that vindication, I took it as a sarcasm—equalled only by the exquisite humor that lay unconsciously hid under another argument which he immediately afterward alleged, that he loved the American Board because, in his early life, he had driven fast horses with some of the missionaries! (Laughter.)

But the most significant part of my friend's address was his plea for the admission of slaveholders into the Church. I confess, sir, this was new to me! For during seven years past, up to Monday night, if anybody had asked me, "Would Plymouth Church, under any circumstances, admit a slaveholder to its membership?" I would have answered most unqualifiedly, "No." I do not now refer to Mr. Beecher's ingenious and adroit explanation of "immediate emancipation," nor to his very humorous references, often made in this pulpit, to "slavery *per se*." The question is not whether it is possible instantaneously, without a moment's flight of time between the will and the deed, for a slaveholder to emancipate his slave; nor whether you cannot conceive of a case of slaveholding which is not a sin *per se*; but whether a Christian Church, looking upon men who own and hold slaves, shall take to herself, what the world will be very ready to give, the reproach of their admission into her fellowship! For, granting, for the argument's sake, that a slaveholder may, in some rare, infrequent instance, hold to day without guilt a slave whom he means to set free to-morrow—holding him not as a slave, but as a man—holding him not in a moral enslavement, but under the mere hollow shell of some legal bond that cannot at this

moment be broken—granting that there can be such a case (and no one will deny that there may, although the owner is then the unwilling master of a voluntary slave, and therefore not a slaveholder, but a man-holder), the question is, Shall such a man, standing in such a relation, be received into a Church which is commanded to obey the apostolic injunction to avoid even the appearance of evil?

Now, this is the best possible or supposable case. But in fifteen free States, even such a possible case is made impossible on their own soil; for if a slave be brought into New York, by his master's consent, the slave is free by law, the moment he crosses the line. A master cannot bring his slave into a free State under such a regulation as my friend proposes to establish for a Church. If, therefore, when a State says to a master, bringing his slave across its borders, "The slave is free!" do we make any extraordinary demand when we turn to the Church and ask it to say the same thing? to say that when a slaveholding church-member, standing in his pew, turns round and sees his own slave coming up the aisle to take a seat at the communion-table, the Church should call out to the slave, as the State calls out, "From the moment you have crossed my threshold, you are free!" Tell me, sir, shall the Christian Church be behind the legislative progress of fifteen States?

A slaveholder is a man and something more—a man with a chattel. Now, I would make the doors of the Church so narrow that when the man tries to get in, the chattel that clings to him shall be rubbed off and dropped behind!

But do you tell me that it is illiberal to exclude from a Church a slave owner who can prove that he stands in this supposable innocent relation to his slave? I reply that if the Church were itself liberal in all other respects—if it were to break down its high strong walls and widen its platform to all the world—if an evangelical Church would admit a Christian man to membership even if he were a Unitarian or a Universalist—if an

orthodox congregation would give their fellowship and open their membership to a sincere and devout Roman Catholic (and my friend has said, in this pulpit, that many a Roman Catholic has been a sincere Christian)—then, I say, I will have no objection to the admission into the Church of a pious and devout slaveholder, whenever you can find such a rarity in the land! But so long as a Church employs a committee to sit at its gates, as the elders sat at the gates of Jerusalem, to make inquisition of every man who knocks for admission—to inquire of every new applicant what is his belief, and what is his practice—so long as no man is allowed to come in who denies certain articles in our creed, or who indulges in certain sins and peccadilloes which our Church condemns—so long as the Church determines to be stringent with her candidates in all these respects, then, sir, I say, let her be equally stringent in her inquiries of every man who comes to her threshold carrying in his hands the symbols of bondage by which he holds his fellow-men under the yoke! That is all I ask!

Is this unreasonable? Look at it! A man applies for admission to this Church. My friend, Mr. Corning, is a member of the Examining Committee. He puts close questions to the stranger. Mr. Corning is a well-known temperance man; and he asks, "Do you use intoxicating liquors as a beverage?" or "Do you sell liquor?" "Yes, sir," is the reply. "Then you cannot come into the membership of this Church." "But," says the man to my friend, questioning him in return, "do you believe that to drink a glass of wine is a sin *per se*?" Mr. Corning cannot say "yes." "Do you believe that to sell a gallon of whiskey is a sin *per se*?" Mr. Corning cannot say "yes." Nevertheless, Mr. Corning does not hesitate to declare that the man must not be admitted! But when, instead of a rumseller, there comes a slaveholder knocking at the door of Christ's fold, what is Mr. Corning's reply? Why, Mr. Corning would ask him a few preliminary questions about justificatory circumstances, and then say, "Come in! come in!" But, sir,

if you exclude a dram-drinker, without stopping to prove a sin *per se*, how can you admit a slaveholder, under the apology of no sin *per se*?

But Mr. Corning took especial pains to say, a few evenings ago, that he would stand on the platform of the Temperance Society side by side with slaveholders. Suppose he would; what has that to do with standing side by side with them in the Church? No Christian profession is required of a man who enters the Temperance Society. If only he be opposed to strong drink, he may believe in every heresy that ever a Church barred out of its creed. Yet, when Mr. Corning spoke so warmly and earnestly of a certain Southern slaveholder, whom he almost mentioned by name—a man prominent in the Temperance Union—a man with whom, as he said, he was not ashamed to stand anywhere, by which I suppose he meant in the Church or out, I could not help saying to myself, "Ah! Mr. Corning, I can tell you a story of that man!" Let me tell it now! The man is a Judge in a Southern Court. A negro was once brought before him for trial, whose offence consisted in having fallen in love with a slave girl, and in afterward attempting to steal her away by night to marry her. He was caught, convicted and sentenced. And what was the sentence? It was the dark decree of *death!*—as if the crime had been murder! When the Judge was written to in remonstrance by some gentlemen in the North, he replied, by return mail, that he had awarded the sentence on the authority of the Holy Bible—adding, "I am surprised that you should have overlooked the text: 'He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hands, he shall surely be put to death!'" Now, it may be very safe for Mr. Corning to call this gentleman to his side, to stand with him in mutual coöperation on the Temperance platform, but what would Mr. Corning's friends in this Church say if they were to see him calling out to this same chivalric South Carolina Judge to come and sit by his side at the communion-table spread out in front of this pulpit, and under this roof!

But, sir, we are not called upon to deal with romantic, ideal cases of slaveholding, where the bondage is no bondage, but only the shadow of it. We are called upon to deal with slavery as black men experience it at the hands of red men; slavery in which slaves are held not because it is impossible to free them; not because they could not take care of themselves if they were free; not because they are old or infirm; but because the masters who own them would lose their market-value by emancipating them; because they are house-servants who are still every day needed to do the service of the house; because, belonging to owners, their owners require that they should be put to a profitable use. I need not say that they are inhumanely treated. I do not mean that any man shall trip me up to-night on the easy charge that I am a fanatic. These slaves, on whose slavery falls the solemn and silent shadow of the American Board, are held in the same common bondage with the great mass of their brethren who suffer servitude at the hands of ministers and members of the great American Church. In a word, they are deprived of their liberty without their consent. This is enough, even if nothing else be added. It is against such slaveholding as this—actual, not imaginary—real, and not ideal—that I ask this Church to bear its testimony.

Now, sir, I had always supposed that, holding these views, I held them in common with the pastor of this Church. A remark was reported to me the other day, since this discussion began, that when the Congregational Church in the other district of this city, of which a brother of Mr. Beecher was chosen minister, met in council to decide upon a form of government, the inquiry arose as to whether they should put into the covenant a provision in reference to the exclusion of slaveholders. Our pastor said, “In the covenant of Plymouth Church, there is no such provision; but we have an examining committee who are sharp enough to detect any rumseller or slaveholder; and you may be sure that neither the one nor the other would ever get in!” Moreover, I have the

printed testimony of the pastor of this Church in which he denies the very position he took the other night! I can quote Henry Ward Beecher against Henry Ward Beecher (laughter). Listen while I read from a report of a speech delivered from this desk, and on this very subject, in the year 1855. After speaking of the American Home Missionary Society, he says:

"But there is another Society that solicits your benefactions—the American Missionary Association. This is an Anti-Slavery Missionary Society, and a large number of you, I know, are interested in it. It has missionaries in the slave States, who establish Churches that refuse fellowship with slaveholders. *That is right; they ought to be BARRED OUT EVERYWHERE!*"

Now, this is quoting the gentleman point blank against himself. Well, what does it mean? It means this. In 1855 a slaveholder knocks at the door of Plymouth Church, and Mr. Beecher, hearing the rap, says, "Bar him out!" In the year 1860 the slaveholder knocks at the same door, and Mr. Beecher, after five years' reflection, says, "Let him in!"

A VOICE—No!

MR. TILTON—No? Let me report the rumors of the streets and the market-place! Wherever I go, whether in the stage, in the railroad car, in the ferry-boat, or on foot up and down the streets, I am perpetually accosted with the question, "Is the pastor of Plymouth Church changing his views? Is Mr. Beecher growing more conservative?" I have always answered these salutations with an emphatic No; and until Monday night I always believed No. But what am I now to say if my friend puts up the bars in 1855, only to let them down in 1860? Martin Luther nailed to the church door at Wittemberg his ninety-five propositions and challenged all the world to dispute them. I have many a time heard the pastor of this Church called the new Martin Luther of the nineteenth century. Five years ago, he nailed upon his church door the declaration that no rum-seller or slaveholder should be admitted to fellowship inside. Does he

now tear down the parchment that has been hanging on these doors ever since I knew this Church ? Nay, sir, will he pluck away the greenest leaves of the laurel that has been growing greener and greener about his head for thirty years ? Everybody asks, " Is he changing ? " I reply only, " Everybody says he is ! " I beg of him, if this be an unjust impression which everybody holds, to rid the public mind of it at once ; I beg of him to clear away such an imputation—in justice to himself, in justice to this Church, in justice to the Lord Jesus whose minister he is !

Now, sir, I charge the American Board with complicity with slavery because it sustains the Cherokee mission. During the last ten or fifteen years, there has been, among the Churches that patronize the Board, a discussion on the subject of the Choctaw and Cherokee missions. The anti-slavery sentiment has always been directed against these two missions, as putting the Board in complicity with slavery. Last year, the Choctaw mission was cut off—for what reasons I will not here state. The general impression among the Churches is that the Cherokee mission was cut off with the Choctaw, and that, therefore, no slavery now remains, to subject the Board any longer to the charge of oppression. Only yesterday, I met the Rev. Mr. Houghton, editor of the *American Presbyterian*, who said to me, " What are you discussing in your Church ? " I replied, " The complicity of the American Board with slavery in its missions among the Indians." " But," said he, " the Board have cut off the Choctaws, and have so cut off slavery." " Yes," said I, " but they still retain the Cherokees." " What !" he inquired, " is there slaveholding among the Cherokees ? " So here was an editor of a religious newspaper published in Philadelphia who did not know that the Cherokee mission was still in connection with the American Board, and that slaveholders were in connection with the mission. A similar erroneous impression prevails widely among the Christian public.

If you look at that map [pointing to a large map

behind the platform], you will see that the Cherokees occupy the whole north of Indian Territory, and the Choctaws the whole south. The territory of the Cherokees is about as large as the State of Massachusetts. These Indians are famous slaveholders. I have received direct information from a black man now in Kansas—who was formerly a slave in the South—who has been bought and sold at different times in and out of three different States of the Union—who was at last bought by a Cherokee owner, from whom he ran away and escaped into Kansas. For slaves run out of the Cherokee nation into Kansas just as, nearer home, they run out of Delaware and Maryland into Pennsylvania. This man declares that he did not suffer in any State such cruel bondage as among the Cherokees. Why? Because the masters are Indians and have been savages. It is natural to suppose that oppression is more cruel under Indians than under whites. I have word also from another slave in Kansas, who goes by the name of "Cherokee Bill"; and he gives a similar testimony.

I will mention another circumstance to show the character of slavery among the Cherokees. If a fugitive escapes from Missouri into Kansas, and the owner sends a slave-catcher after him, the hunter, if a successful hunt has yielded him his prey, sometimes carries him back to his master, to be repaid by the proceeds of half the slave's value realized in cash at public auction, but very often, instead of carrying him back, he marches him across the Kansas line into the Cherokee nation, to sell him captive to the Indians, from whom often he can get more money than a mere half price! So that the slave-hunters carry on a double knavery; first, catching the slaves when they escape, and, then, when they are caught, taking them to more rigorous masters, who will pay a higher price.

Such are some of the features of slave-hunting and slaveholding as practised by the Cherokees!

I now undertake to review the historic action of the American Board on the subject of slavery, with a view

to show its lamentable complicity with this terrible system as it exists among these Indians.

Mr. Beecher began his review, in detail, at 1845 ; I begin mine at 1841. At the meeting of that year, held in Philadelphia, a memorial was presented from seventeen ministers of New Hampshire, most of whom were honorary members of the Board, asking it to break what appeared to them "a studied silence on the subject of American slavery." The memorialists said :

" We do think that American slavery is such—and brought, in the providence of God, so distinctly into the notice of American Christians—that no man or body of men can innocently maintain a doubtful position in relation to it."

What did the Board reply ? They replied :

" In regard to the particular object of the memorialists—that of obtaining a formal expression of the views and feelings of the Board respecting slavery—your Committee do not think that such a measure is called for, or that it would be right or expedient ! "

At the next meeting, which was in Norwich, Ct., in 1842, the attention of the Board was called to the question, " whether any, or, if any, how many, of its missionaries were slaveholders." It then appeared that the Prudential Committee had, for six years, had a letter in their hands, written by one of their missionaries, *stating the fact of his holding slaves.* For six years ! Yes, sir ; and during all this time his letter was lying in the Missionary House, suppressed by the Committee. Yet Mr. Beecher said (I believe, without his knowing the facts) that, from the beginning until now, the Board had acted up to its highest light and had kept pace with the progress of the times on the subject of slavery ! But the Board said of slavery, that very year :

" We consider it as one of the obvious evils which exist in the community, the removal of which, though we regard it as an object of fervent desire and prayer, does not fall within our province as a *Missionary Board.* These are our settled principles."

But the memorialists urged that the Board had taken occasion to condemn other evils, and why not slavery, the sum of evils? To this the Board replied :

" It is alleged by the memorialists that the Board has departed from these principles and has expressed opinions relative to other prevailing evils. Respecting intemperance, licentiousness, Indian oppression, and some other hindrances to the progress of Christianity, as they prevailed in the countries where the missions of the Board are established, and powerfully counteracted the labors of the missionaries, and in some instances subjected them to great peril, *the Board has stated the facts as they occurred, and in various forms, more or less explicit, has uttered the language of condemnation.* These evils, existing in the countries where the missions are operating, and standing directly in the way of the Board's accomplishing its object, *were, of course, legitimate and proper subjects for its animadversion.* If it has at any time gone further than this, and expressed opinions relative to immoralities or evils of any kind, prevailing in this country, *and not directly counteracting the labors of the missionaries,* your Committee regard such action as a departure from the great principles on which the Board was organized, and by which they think its proceedings should always be governed."

Now, what is the meaning of these words? Sir, they mean that intemperance, licentiousness and Indian oppression are hindrances to the missions; but that slavery is *no hindrance!* That is a Christian discrimination for you! Yet Mr. Beecher, in speaking of the Board as it stood in 1845, said, " You must remember the general sentiment on temperance then—how lax it was." But even three years before 1845, in 1842, the Board was already *leading* public sentiment on this subject; it had already expressed unequivocally its condemnation of intemperance among the Cherokees; it had done this notwithstanding what my friend called the "general laxity of public sentiment in respect to intemperance"; but at the same time, it let slavery *entirely alone.*

You perceive that it bore testimony against licentious-

ness. . What is the most fruitful cause of licentiousness in a slaveholding country? Slavery! And why? Because it breaks down all barriers to honor, because it despoils chastity, because it invades the sanctity of the family, because it destroys every personal right! Yet the Board, in testifying against these separate evils, said not a single word against that which was at that very time the fruitful mother of them all!

The report speaks of " Indian Oppression!" Ah, yes! how near it came to saying the right word! It saved itself only by making it plainly appear that " Indian oppression" meant oppression by Indians in the East, not by Indians in the West!

The next meeting was at Worcester, in 1844. The memorials kept pouring in! Yet, if the Board was really up with the spirit of the times, why was it troubled with such a host of memorials? What did the memorialists ask? They said :

" We ask the Board earnestly to entreat all the missionaries and agents under its patronage to bear decided testimony against the sin of oppression, wherever and in whatever form it exists; and most especially to declare, in the name of the Board, of the Churches represented by it, and of Jesus Christ whom they preach, that American slavery is a sin against God, and that its existence in a Christian land is in nowise chargeable to the Christian religion which they are commissioned to preach, but is grossly at variance with all its holy doctrines and precepts. *And we further pray that the Board would immediately take measures to ascertain to what extent slavery or oppression exists in the Churches under its patronage, and especially among the Choctaws and other Indian tribes; and take such action at this meeting as shall speedily remove the evil, or exonerate them and their missionaries from all the responsibility and guilt of its continuance or toleration.*"

Now, my friend says we must remember the difference in public sentiment between that time and this. But this appeal in 1844 is all we ask in 1860! We ask no more now than those memorialists asked then! But so far from the Board keeping pace with the times on this sub-

ject, before the very next annual meeting the Rev. Amos A. Phelps wrote and left on record these words :

" The position of the Board, from the beginning of the present movement in behalf of the slave, is that of *resistance to the general progress, and on the side of slavery.*"

It is too late, therefore, for Mr. Beecher to say in 1860 that the Board kept pace with the progress of the age, when in 1844, an eye witness of the progress which the age was making declared that the Board was resisting that general progress, and on the side of slavery !

What was done by the Board in that year ? They quoted their declaration of the preceding year, adding only these words :

" It is quite certain that, without a change of views, the Board can do nothing beyond this."

A change of views ! That is what I charge—that they needed a change of views ! They had not yet been converted to anti-slavery sentiment. In genuine conversion there are two things, namely, a change of views and a change of conduct. The Board had not then come even to a change of views !

Then followed the meeting in 1845, with which Mr. Beecher began his speech. So long ago as that year, he said, the Board gave utterance to anti-slavery principles. He quoted from the annual report an allusion to Dr. Chalmers's admission that slaveholding was not necessarily sinful. The words of the quotation were scarcely out of his mouth before a note, written in lead-pencil, was passed to me in my seat by a stranger in the audience. It was in these words :

" The opinion of Dr. Chalmers and others of the Scotch Free Church was delivered at a time when a deputation had visited the United States to collect funds for the support of the Free Church. The people of Scotland (the Dissenters) held public meetings, at which it was urged that the Free Church should ' cast back to America the impious gift.' "

More than that, when I went to my office next morning,

I found on my desk a note from another gentleman to whom Mr. Beecher referred by name, in reading his quotation from Dr. Chalmers; I mean Mr. M'Kay, a Scotchman and a member of Plymouth Church. I will read part of it:

*"I ask you to vindicate 'Auld Scotia' for her own sake, and for mine. In the year 1843, the 'Disruption' gave birth to the Free Church of Scotland. They were in want of money, and sent a deputation from Scotland to these United States for the purpose of soliciting their sympathy and assistance. They went to the Southern States, received the hospitality and contributions of slaveholders and slaveholding Churches, and this in spite of a protest made to them on their arrival at New York. They went back to Scotland with a good deal of money—and a great deal of disgrace (laughter); and from the Tweed to John O'Groats the Free Church became a hissing and a by-word, so much so that you might have seen placarded, around the streets of Edinburgh, 'Send back the money—Send back the money.'"*

Mr. BEECHER—Did they send it back? (Laughter.)

Mr. TILTON—I do not know; but they ought to have sent it back (renewed laughter and applause). So much for Dr. Chalmers!

Now, this report of 1845 cites some facts, among which I select two. It says:

*"In Christian instruction and care, both of their children and their slaves, the missionaries represent these Indian church-members as being generally and often greatly deficient."*

Also,

*"Among the Cherokees and Choctaws the church-members are but poorly qualified to give religious instruction; and often the slaves—owing to their better knowledge of the English language, and consequently their easier intercourse with the missionaries and others—are more intelligent on religious subjects than their masters."*

And yet Mr. Beecher thinks that the Report of 1845 expresses a true sentiment on the subject of slavery.

What sentiment does it express? Not that an ignorant slave shall be held by a kind-hearted master and trained and educated, until he shall at last be lifted up into the light and liberty of the sons of God; but that an intelligent slave, well-informed on religious subjects, having the grace of God in his heart, shall be held in bondage by an ignorant man, who wrongly treats not only his own slaves, but his own children!

I need not ask him to answer whether that is a "true sentiment on the subject of slavery"!

In view of these facts, laid before the Board, what was done? Nothing! Mark you, the Board knew that ignorant men, unable to take care of their own children, were trying to take care of slaves who knew more than their masters; and yet the Board, knowing full well, from the testimony of their own Secretary, that this was the character of these slaveholders, approved their admission to the Mission Churches! Is it possible, then, that Mr. Beecher can believe "the Board was up to the progress of the times on the subject of slavery"? Is it possible that he can say, "I am not ashamed to stand where they stood"?

Ah, sir, what must have been the feelings of those intelligent slaves whom this report so highly compliments?—those slaves who knew more than their masters—those slaves so well informed on religious subjects—those slaves whose minds God had enlightened and whose hearts he had touched with his love?—I ask, sir, what must have been their emotions when this report from the Board reached their hovels and cabins? I think I can almost see the figure of Christ standing once again, as of old, among his poor on earth, and with that divine voice that spake as never man spake, saying, with sad reproach, to that Missionary Board, "*Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me!*"

Now, sir, I am willing to admit that there are a great many things in this report that are sound, frank and anti-slavery; but what was the action which followed the words? The action! Was it up to the progress of the

age? No, sir! For almost at that very moment—after this message had been sent by the American Board to those slaves—the new Society, the American Missionary Association, sprang into existence as a living protest against the Board's complicity with slavery. It was formed because the Board had proved itself behind the progress of the times. The American Missionary Association arose in testimony against that backwardness; and to-day, every one of its missionaries and agents, every one of its members and contributors, makes a virtual protest against the Board's complicity with slavery. Every one of its distant mission stations—in the West Indies, in Africa, in the Sandwich Islands, among the Copts of Egypt, and nearer home, in Canada, among the Obijue and Ottawa Indians—makes a perpetual protest against that Board! Yes, sir, even among the Indians. For the Indians of one tribe, receiving their religious teachings from the Missionary Association, rise up in protest against the slavery practised by another tribe who are sanctioned in their oppression by the American Board!

Mr. BEECHER—I would like to ask whether Mr. Tilton would prefer that any misstatement of fact he makes respecting my speech should be met at the time, or whether I should reserve the correction until he finishes his speech.

Mr. TILTON—I would consult your own preference, not mine, in regard to that.

Mr. BEECHER—I did not undertake to say that the Board, in 1841, 2, 3, 5, nor 1848, were up to the standard of the present time, nor up to the standard of some of the most enlightened men of those times. I merely said, comprehensively, that, looking at the Board, in its action from 1845 up to this day, it had been influenced by the times and had come up to their standard.

Mr. TILTON—Any remarks which my friend may make, I shall receive in the spirit of kindness and courtesy.

I now come to the meeting of 1848, held at Boston—the year in which Mr. Treat made his famous report. It will be remembered that my friend compared Mr. Treat's

report to the Epistles to the Corinthians! Now, let us see what it is that is so much like the Epistles to the Corinthians (laughter). In respect to the number of slaves, Mr. Treat writes :

" Some say that among the Cherokees there are not more than seven hundred ; while others think there are as many as fifteen hundred. The latter is the estimate of the Principal Chief, and it is most likely to be correct. At any rate we must suppose the proportion of slaves to Cherokees to be nearly, if not quite, one to ten. It is hardly possible that, persons held in bondage by such a people should be in as favorable circumstances as those who have fallen into the hands of enlightened and humane masters in the States ; especially if those masters are under the influence of Christian principle, and are endeavoring to treat their slaves according to the injunctions of the gospel."

Now, these extracts show that these slaves were not in so happy a condition as others in other places, who had access to the New Testament. This deprivation of the Scriptures, however, was soon to be remedied in part ; for as soon as Mr. Treat could send them his letter, they would have, if not the whole Scriptures, at least the Epistles to the Corinthians (laughter). I will read some more verses from these Epistles :

" The predominant influence in both nations is mainly in the hands of slaveholders. The intelligence and enterprise which enable them to acquire this species of property also qualify them for an active and successful participation in public affairs. And many belonging to this class would certainly resist, to the utmost, any proposal tending to the abolition of slavery."

Give good heed, for I am quoting from Mr. Beecher's Scriptures (laughter).

" It does not seem to have been the aim of the brethren to exert any *direct* influence, either by their public or their private teachings, upon the system of slavery. And they discovered, as they supposed, a sufficient warrant for this course in the *New Testament*."

What? In the Epistles to the Corinthians? Yes!

For, if not in the old Epistles of St. Paul, at least in the new Epistle of St. Treat! (Laughter.)

Mr. BEECHER—I think you have extracted from two documents; the first a letter, the second a report. My remark in reference to the uninspired book of Corinthians (laughter) was to the letter and not the report.

Mr. TILTON—Well, sir, it makes very little difference; both are from Mr. Treat.

What, now, are the views of the missionaries themselves? The missionaries among the Cherokees have said, in a document signed by all their number:

"In regard to the question of rejecting any person from the Church *simply because he is a slaveholder*, we cannot for a moment hesitate. For we regard it as *certain* that *the Apostles, who are our patterns, did receive slaveholders to the communion of the Church*; and we have not yet been able to perceive any such difference between their circumstances and ours as to justify us in departing from their practice in this respect."

Thus they defend slaveholding from the Bible! They say, moreover:

"Nor can we even make it a test of piety, or a condition of admission to the privileges of the Church, that a candidate *should express a determination not to live and die a slaveholder*."

That is to say, they would not only receive slaveholders, but would not require them to give a pledge that they would not live and die slaveholders. Still further:

"You asked (say the missionaries), among other things, whether we would undertake to discipline a church member for buying or selling slaves as merchandise, for gain."

Now, the letter of the missionaries goes on to give a large number of instances. I will recite one:

"Between the two extremes of purchasing for the slave's sake, and buying and selling with a total disregard of the interest of the slave, there are many cases of mixed motive, where the buyer or seller might allow that he had regard to his own interest; but yet, as he makes the condition of the slave no worse but perhaps much better, by the transfer, neither he nor most of his brethren in the Church could be led to see that he had been guilty of any violation of the law of love."

Oh, yes ! That is the argument that seeks to promote the revival of the slave trade ! To bring the benighted African to this country to receive the benefits of Christian institutions !

"Occasional exchanges of masters," they add, "are so inseparable from the existence of slavery that the Churches could not consistently receive slaveholders to their communion at all, and at the same time forbid all such exchanges. We regard it, therefore, as impossible to exercise discipline for the buying or selling of slaves, except in flagrant cases of manifest disregard to the welfare of the slave."

Is this the commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians ? Why, sir, print that and send it to Italy ; let it find its way into Florence, where Mrs. Stowe is now residing ; say that Henry Ward Beecher's name is at the bottom of it as endorsement ; what would Mrs. Stowe say ? She would exclaim, with a blush, "It is a forgery of his name !" Nay, sir, the pastor of this Church would himself blush to see his name signed to any such sentiment as that ! Buying and selling slaves ! What is that but the Slave Trade ? And what is the Slave Trade ? Ah, sir, on the high seas, it is pronounced piracy, but—wonderful anomaly!—on land it is pronounced Christianity ! Yet what is the difference between the horrors of the middle passage and the horrors of the overland passage ? What is the difference between the sufferings of the lower deck and the terrors of the chain gang ? None at all, sir ! I tell you there is just as much deep despair and hopeless horror in the slave jail as there ever was in the slave ship ! And yet these missionaries have set their hand and seal to this paper, which declares that they cannot forbid, even in their own Churches, the buying and selling of men and women ! In other words, under the name of carrying on missionary operations, they are carrying on the slave trade ! They say further :

"In regard to the separation of parents and children, we must first remark that it is one of those things which are not forbidden by any express INJUNCTION OF SCRIPTURE."

\* \* \* \* "Very young children, we believe, are seldom sepa-

*rated from their mothers. In our Churches, we do not remember to have known an instance. In regard to older children, many cases may arise where neither the condition of the parent nor that of the child will be rendered worse, but that of one of them may be greatly improved by the proposed separation ; and where it cannot be readily shown to be any more a violation of the law of love than any other transfer of a slave from one master to another. It is impossible, in our circumstances, to make it a general rule that the separation of parents and children, by sale or purchase, shall be regarded as a disciplinable offence."*

These are the views of the missionaries ! Now, who wrote this statement of principles ? It was written by the Rev. Mr. Worcester, whose name signs it. Yet, do you not remember how Mr. Beecher eulogized this same Rev. Mr. Worcester, the other night ? You have not yet forgotten how he described him with glowing words as a man in whose veins flowed New England blood, upon whose arms had hung prisoners' chains, and who once had been thrown into a dungeon for Christ's sake ! My friend asked, " Could such a man, with such New England blood, be anything else than an anti-slavery man ? " But, sir, that was the very man whose hand wrote these lines ! Archbishop Cranmer, in a moment of weakness, recanted his Protestant faith ; afterwards, when his conscience reproached him, he recanted his recantation ; he was soon after brought to suffer at the stake. While the fires of martyrdom were kindling about him, he stretched out his right hand into the flames, and there held it until it was burned off, and fell to ashes, crying out the while, " Unworthy hand ! unworthy hand ! " Sir, if I had written only the single sentence that I have read from this statement, so quietly and sacredly sanctioning the tearing away of children from their parents, whenever I looked upon the hand that had held the pen, I would have cried out, " Unworthy hand ! unworthy hand ! "

And yet my friend stood on these boards on Monday night to picture to us, in complimentary strain, the current of New England blood that flowed in this man's veins, and to say, pointing with his emphatic finger,

"Here was an anti-slavery man!" Sir [turning to Mr. Beecher], I know too well your quick instinct for freedom ever to believe that you were cognizant of these facts when you uttered that eulogy!

But, besides, in regard to the impression which my friend produced, that Mr. Worcester was thrown into prison because of his allegiance to the anti-slavery cause, this is an entire mistake. The facts were simply these: The Cherokee mission was at that time in the State of Georgia. The Legislature of Georgia tried to crowd out the Indians from the State in order to seize their lands. Mr. Worcester, who was at that early day a missionary, defended the Indians. For that reason, and for that reason alone, he was put in jail. There was not a shadow of anti-slavery principle involved in the matter.

Now, what did the Board do after all these statements had been received from the missionaries, at that famous meeting of 1848? Why, sir, Dr. Blanchard, who has since been President of Knox College, offered the following resolution:

"Resolved, That this Board distinctly admits and affirms the principle that slaveholding is a practice which is not to be allowed in the Christian Church."

How was this resolution received? Look at the annual report of 1848! Here is the neat and pretty record. The report remarks:

"Dr. Blanchard having been requested to withdraw these resolutions, consented to do so; and the Board permitted them to be inserted in the minutes of the meeting."

Now, would not any one suppose, on reading these minutes, that Dr. Blanchard, after having offered his resolution, finally came to a sober second thought, and thought it better to withdraw it? Certainly! But turn back to the newspaper files of that day and see what was the sentiment of that meeting. The moment it became apparent that the Board was going to sweep away the resolution, without leaving even so much as a record of it on the minutes, the Rev. Edward Beecher rose to his feet and protested, saying, "Gentlemen, you must not do that!" Dr. Lyman Beecher followed his son, protest-

ing, with all the eloquence of his palmiest days, "Brethren, you must not do that!" But the resolution could not be passed, and the only way to get it on the records at all, in a parliamentary manner, was for Dr. Blanchard to withdraw it. So it was withdrawn, not willingly, but necessarily. But the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher says that, comprehensively, he has agreed to sympathize with the Board from the beginning! Will he sympathize with that against which both his brother and his father protested? His brother Edward was then, as he is now, an older man than he, by some years; and perhaps, therefore, their disparity of views may be put down to the "Conflict of Ages" (loud laughter).

Skipping now the long interval of seven years of silence, we come to the visit of Secretary Wood to the Choctaws and Cherokees, in 1855. We come to the Goodwater document. Mr. Beecher says that the case must stand or fall with the Goodwater document. That paper begins as follows:

"Slavery, as a system, and in its own proper nature, is what it is described to be in the General Assembly's Act of 1818, and the Report of the American Board adopted at Brooklyn in 1845."

I have already read a sufficient part of the report of 1845 to show that it meant nothing. Now, what is the "General Assembly's Act of 1818"?

Here let me ask, Has anybody in this wide land ever been more severe against the Colonization Society than the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher? Every one who is familiar with his speeches will say "No." You know that that Society says to the black man who wants liberty, "You can get it only at the price of expatriation and exile." And yet, by accepting this report of the General Assembly of 1818, the missionaries distinctly declare their adhesion to the principles of the Colonization Society, and express their desire to carry on its work of expatriation!

Still further. Does the testimony of 1818 make the buying and selling of slaves a disciplinable offence? No,

only so far as "selling slaves to those who will either themselves deprive these unhappy people of the blessings of the gospel, or who will transport them to places where the gospel is not proclaimed." And yet this document is what Mr. Beecher says he is willing to stand or fall by!

I admit that there are many strong utterances in the General Assembly's Act of 1818; but tell me why this Presbyterian document was sent for signature to a Congregational mission? When the Prudential Committee wanted the missionaries to utter a testimony against slavery, why did they not ask the missionaries to write their testimony with fresh ink and on fresh paper? Why did the Prudential Committee dig up out of the dust a dingy parchment well-nigh fifty years old? The reason is plain! From the very year of the signing of that document down through all the long lapse of time until to-day, *that act has been a dead letter*. I speak the truth! No man can gainsay it! For, what kind of testimony is that, against slavery, under which, as I have already read, there has grown up a Presbyterian Church which at this moment is holding in bonds thousands and tens of thousands of human beings! Under the shadow of that Act of 1818, there has been gathered together, in the Presbyterian Church, so great a multitude of slaves, owned by its members and its ministers, that if they were marshalled into one host, they would make an Emperor's grand army! I gave you, from a table of statistics, the exact number—77,000! Listen to a story which the Rev. Mr. Fee, of Kentucky, tells:

"I know the case of a minister in this same Church, and in our State, who, that he might take another man's wife from him (which woman he claimed as his slave, and said to be so white that she was freckled), hastened from house to house on Sabbath morning to hire the sons of Presbyterian elders to go forthwith and hunt his slave woman; and being reproved by a Methodist sister for tempting the young men to go and desecrate the Sabbath, he replied, 'Madam, it is the preacher's nigger.' And yet, that man was and is a preacher in good and regular standing in that body."

This is the kind of anti-slavery sentiment and practice

that has grown up in the great Presbyterian Church, Old School and New, under the shadow of the General Assembly's Act of 1818, by which my friend declares he will either stand or fall !

What is the next thing in this Goodwater platform ?

"Privation of liberty in holding slaves is, therefore, not to be ranked with things indifferent, but with those which, if not made right by special justificatory circumstances and the intention of the doer, are morally wrong."

Now, let me ask, what is it, in any case, that makes slaveholding justifiable ? I call to your mind the Golden Rule—" Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Now, who is to be the judge ? Who is to decide what are justifiable and what are unjustifiable circumstances ? Is it the missionary ? Is it the Church ? Is it the slaveholder ? No ! I declare, in the name of the divine Author of the Golden Rule, that neither of these is to be the judge ! Who then ? Sir, I hold that you must go first and go only to *the slave* ! Ask *him* if he be justifiably held in his chains ! If *he* says " Yea !" then your bondage may be innocent ; but if he says " Nay," then, though master, missionary, church and all were to cry out, " He is rightfully enslaved," I declare, in the name of the God of justice, that no plea that goes by the name of a justifying circumstance will, for a moment, prevail before the great bar of Him whose judgment is righteous and just ! God will accept repentance of the wrong, but not a vindication of it ! And if a slave, held in slavery by a man who is a member of Christ's Church, declares that he is deprived of his liberty without his consent, then, sir, the Great Teacher of the Golden Rule, and all the great host of God's elect that look down from heaven to earth, protest against the bondage, and pronounce it sin ! Ah ! I recall those searching words of Christ—" If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift upon the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift" ! Now, when a slaveholder comes to the communion-table with his slave by his side,

let him, before he sits down to eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, turn round, and, looking into the face of that dusky man, and remembering the scripture, ask himself, "Has my brother aught against me?" and if there, under the arches of Christ's Church—if there, in the presence of Christ's majesty—the bondman should say that he is willingly held in his bonds, and has aught against his oppressor, that may be a justifiable circumstance. But I declare, by the authority of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is no other justifiable circumstance under the sun! If the slave gives his own consent, I interpose no objection; but if the slave be unwillingly bound, I ask the Church to break the chain!

Mr. Beecher left the impression upon his audience that the laws of the Cherokee nation forbid or prevent emancipation. Now, I have searched to find some such law. I have found none. On the contrary, I have found quite a different law. The legislation of the Cherokees, so far as it affects free negroes and slaves, appears to be milder than that of most of the States. The only restriction is this: if a slave be emancipated, his master shall be responsible for what he does after his emancipation, as before; that is, if he robs a hen-roost or an orchard, his former master shall pay the damages. That is all. There is no prohibition in the way of emancipation. Mr. Beecher cannot say that the slaves in the Cherokee Churches are held in slavery because the strong arm of the law is over them. The arm of the law is powerless to prevent their emancipation. The masters are at liberty to emancipate their slaves, if they will, but they will not! That is the reason why I arraign the Cherokee Mission and the Board that sustains it!

I now come to a passage in the Goodwater platform which my friend omitted to read. Sometimes swift skaters, on coming suddenly to an air-hole in the ice, instinctively, and without stopping to look, leap over it at a bound! So my friend, in the rapidity of his reading, on finding himself coming into a dangerous place, half

unconsciously leaped over a significant sentence in the Good-water Platform. Speaking of a missionary's duties, the platform says :

*"As a missionary, he has nothing to do with political questions and agitations!"*

Now, I do not say that my friend omitted these words intentionally ; I believed at the time, and believe now, that he did not notice what he was omitting ; but you remember, when I called his attention to the slighted sentence, and asked him to read it with the rest, he turned back and read it, and then turned around and exclaimed rather humorously, " Make the most of it !" Yes, sir, I will make the most of it ; I hope to make a good deal of it (laughter). I want to know if it has not been the testimony of this Church, and of its minister, from the beginning until now, that the Church of Christ, and its ministers, must have something to do with " political questions and agitations " ? Nay, sir, I can once more quote Beecher against Beecher ! For only last evening he delivered a lecture in New York on " Politics and Religion," in which, as if on purpose to throw out a quiet commentary on his speech of the night before, he uttered these words, which I find in *The Tribune's report* :

" Wherever you find a man whose politics and religion are kept separate, you always find that his politics are the cream, and his religion the skim milk." To which the reporter's account then adds, " great applause ! " (Laughter.)

Now, sir, this is called the Goodwater platform ; let us call it rather the good milk and water platform ! (Loud laughter.)

But some of the missionaries themselves have repudiated these very Goodwater declarations. I quote a letter from the Choctaw missionaries, printed in *The New York Observer* of Dec. 2d, 1858. I will merely state that as soon as the missionaries had signed and sealed this document, the Board at Utica said, " We have got the missionaries to say something " ; the anti-slavery men said, " We have something to be satisfied with " ; but the very moment the missionaries heard of what the Board said,

they repudiated what they themselves said. They wrote in a letter :

"The construction put upon the Goodwater platform, by the Board at Utica, makes it impossible for us to regard that as an expression of our principles."

So much, therefore, for the Goodwater platform !

Now, last of all in this documentary chain, I come to the last annual report ; that of 1859. Mr. Treat, having done with the Epistles to the Corinthians, now undertakes to write an Epistle to the Choctaws. He says :

"It is proper that we should review, in the fewest possible words, the history of a question which has received so much attention within the last few years. You remark that your policy had 'the full approbation of the Secretaries and the Prudential Committee for more than five-and twenty years, and was finally approved with perfect unanimity by the Board at Brooklyn.' For much of the time since the meeting at Brooklyn, we have supposed that there was no material difference between your mission and ourselves. In the year 1848, indeed, there seemed to be some divergency ; but in the following year you declared your assent to the letter of the Cherokee mission, dated March 21, 1848, 'as expressing in a clear and condensed manner' your 'main views and principles' ; and verbal statements, subsequently made by some of your number, gave the Committee very great satisfaction."

What, sir, is the implication of this paragraph ? What was it that gave the Committee such "very great satisfaction" ? It was in looking back, in 1859, to the "main views and principles" of 1848. What were these ? Why, they were the declarations drawn up by the Rev. Mr. Worcester, which I have already read ; showing that the missionaries had found a way to receive slaveholders into the Church, and to sanction it from the Bible ; that they had found a way of admitting them to Christ's communion without exacting a pledge that they "would not live and die slaveholders" ; that they had found a way of giving them the right hand of fellowship in the Church and still allowing them to buy and sell their fellow-men, as property, under the pleasant and easy phrase of "occasional exchanges of masters" ; that they had found a way of advancing Christ's kingdom on the earth by the separation of little children from their parents, and sending

them to the auction-block to be sold ! These, sir, *these* were the " main views and principles " which gave the Committee such " very great satisfaction " !

Yet here is where my friend says he stands, and where he is not ashamed to stand ! At this point he takes leave of the argument, and says to this Missionary Board, " God speed, venerable Board !" Here he remembers, and recounts with bewitching humor, how, in his early days, he drove a fast horse with a missionary, and got over, in half an hour, a road which it took his father an hour and a-half to travel (laughter).

Now, what was the action of the Board at its last meeting ? The history of forty-three years was well known. The fact of slaveholding in the Mission Churches was well known. The uninterrupted agitation since 1841 was well known. The steadfast resistance of the Board to the cause of freedom was well known. All this was known—known for years, and known, moreover, as stigmatized by thousands of Christian men as a shame and a reproach. But now came another annual meeting ; now came another chance of remedying the past ; now came a full and free opportunity to speak a word which should at last atone for the silence of forty years ! But what was done at this last meeting, held in Philadelphia ? A resolution was offered declaring that slaveholding should be regarded as *prima facie* evidence that the slaveholder was unfit for church membership. It was drawn by Dr. Cheever, in the following words :

" That, in the opinion of the Board, the holding of slaves be pronounced an immorality, inconsistent with membership in any Christian Church ; and that it ought to be required that these Missionary Churches should immediately put away from themselves this sin, and should cease to sanction it even in appearance."

What is the meaning of that resolution ? It means that when a man, holding a yoke on the neck of a slave, comes and asks admission to the Church, the fact should be regarded, at first blush, as a strong evidence against him, and that he should be required to prove himself clear of guilt before he could be received. Was that not fair ?

Nay, sir, was that not moderate? If the Board had been at that time, as Mr. Beecher claimed it to be, an anti-slavery body, would not an anti-slavery body have passed that resolution? Well, sir, what was the fate of the resolution? It was swept clear of the house by a unanimous vote to lay it upon the table!

Nor was this all. A respectful and temperate memorial against the revival of the slave trade was similarly cleared from the docket—crowded over into another year, in order to be pushed to a safe distance from the critical time when it was most needed! This is the Board's last record on the subject of slavery—a refusal to utter a word of condemnation against a traffic which consists in the theft of human beings!

In view, therefore, of these evidences—and these are but a small part of what might have been given—I openly declare that the American Board is in palpable complicity with American slavery. I have quoted to you their own reports. I have made no statements of fact of which I have not furnished documentary proof. Have I not, in view of these proofs, shown that my friend uttered a mistaken judgment when he declared that the record of the Board, on the subject of slavery, was "clean, clear and pure?"

But, sir, shut the books and records! I have no taste for this kind of reasoning; I do not like mere technical argument; I never was born to be a lawyer. What are the great facts that have been for forty years staring the whole world in the face?

This mission to the Cherokees was founded in 1817; it is now more than two-score years old; the missionaries have been at their work until they have grown gray; they have moulded the mission with their own bands; they have made it a moral power against all the sins of the Indians, except their greatest sin; they have set on foot among that semi barbarous people all the reforms of Christianity, except the single one that was most needed; they have made Christian quarrel with every wrong, but the greatest wrong; they have borne testimony against every villany, but the sum of all villanies! To-day, there

is drunkenness among those Indians, and the missionaries testify against that ; there is gambling, and they testify against that ; there is theft, and they testify against that ; there is slavery, and they *shut their mouths* !

The missionaries have to a great degree shaped the civilization of the Cherokees ; yet in reclaiming these savages from one barbarism, they have sanctioned them in another ; they have converted them from a heathenism of ignorance to teach them a heathenism of oppression. The Indians, growing up under the influence of the mission stations, have been taught to believe that they can hold their slaves inside the Church as they held them outside. The teachings of the missionaries, and the action of the Board, have failed to make the impression upon those naughty half-breeds that to hold, and buy, and sell their fellow-creatures as property is incompatible with the Christian religion !

You will recollect that, years ago, this Misionary Board arose, in the providence of God, to such wide influence and power in this land that its decisions went forth almost like the imperial decrees of the first Napoleon from Paris ! If the Board had chosen to act against slavery, it would have set in motion one of the greatest engines in the Church ! It would have been like a battering-ram against the bulwark of oppression. I have already quoted the words of Albert Barnes, that slavery could not exist a day against the power of the Church. The American Board could have spoken the word and done the work ; it wielded the power of well-nigh half the American Church ; but it chose rather to allow the great opportunity of the age to go by ; it shut its mouth and was dumb !

Mr. Treat made a very significant remark in 1848. He said, speaking of the Board's efforts among these Indians :

*"It is very clear that the influence of the missions is neutralized to some extent by the existence of slavery."*

To this statement of Mr. Treat, I add a commentary of facts. In the Cherokee mission,

In 1836 there were 260 members.

" 1848 " 236 "

" 1855 " 200 "

You perceive the gradual decrease. But why should there be a *decrease*? Did not Mr. Beecher say that "usually there are more converts in Churches among the heathen than in Churches at home"? What, then, is the cause of the reversal of the general rule, among the Cherokees? Mr. Treat fatally gives the answer himself — "*Slavery neutralizes the missions*"!

That noble man and missionary, David T. Stoddard, who spent his life in the East, said :

*"We do not dare to let our converts know that slavery exists in America; for how could we reconcile it with our professions as a Christian nation?"*

But Mr. Beecher says that in looking at the past history of the Board, he finds evidence that it has been gradually growing better and better. Does he remember how, year after year, Nehemiah Adams, the man who sees only the "South-side view," has been invariably re-elected a member of the Prudential Committee? Mr. Beecher, in his last evening's lecture, let fly at this same Dr. Adams an arrow that might well-nigh have stung him to death. Does Mr. Beecher think that Nehemiah Adams is wrong everywhere else, but right in the Prudential Committee? Does he not know that this annual re-election is made the occasion of an annual boasting as a triumph over what is called the fanatical New England sentiment? But Mr. Beecher says the Board is improving. Well, improving how? I heard, the other day, a capital story of Mr. Littell, the publisher of the *Living Age*. He was afflicted with a sore leg; he called a physician from a distance; the leg was treated as a serious case; the recovery was very slow; at last the physician went away, leaving directions behind him, and telling his patient to report by letter; at the end of two or three months, the doctor received a letter somewhat as follows: "Dear Sir: My leg is improving; if I look at it day by day, I do not see any advance; if I compare it week by week, I notice only very little; if I look back month by month, I see only a little more; but three months ahead

perhaps I shall be able to see considerable improvement. On the whole, my leg may eventually get well, but *not in my day*" (great laughter). Now, sir, I am willing to admit that the American Board may be improving little by little, year by year ; nay, sir, comparing long intervals, it may be improving considerably ; still, I do not think it will be well in our day (laughter). What does it need ? It needs the surgeon's knife, and that is what I ask this Church to give it !

Now, I beg you to bear in mind one thing. In the report of 1848 it is declared that

*"The Board is directly responsible for the teachings of the missionaries."*

It is declared also that

*"When evils exist in the Mission Churches, the Prudential Committee may and must inquire whether the missionaries are performing their duty."*

Now, we have been told, in this debate, that the Board, not being an ecclesiastical body, can have no ecclesiastical power. The Churches under its patronage, it is said, are independent of its control. The adroit excuse is offered, that the Prudential Committee at Boston have no authority over the mission at Goodwater. No, sir, this excuse is not valid. We do not ask the Committee to exercise ecclesiastical power over the missionaries. We wish them to say only this : "To our brethren over the prairies, greeting : we have no control over you or your Churches, and we wish none ; but we are put in trust with and have control over the funds with which you are supported ; now, we say to you frankly, if you receive slaveholders into your Churches, and so put us in complicity with slavery, we will give you no more money !" That would end the controversy in short order !

Suppose it were reported at the Missionary House in Pemberton Square that the missionaries among the Cherokees were receiving into their Churches Unitarians, or Universalists, or Roman Catholics ; what would the Prudential Committee do ? I tell you that the Pope of Rome never thundered a bull of excommunication more

suddenly at renegade priest or Protestant heretic than the American Board would send forth a letter of excommunication of those backsliding missionaries ! When any sin but the national sin comes to light, Pemberton Square gathers blackness and thunders forth its voice ! Let the cry of adultery be raised against an unfortunate Secretary, and the Prudential Committee rise up in their majesty and might, and, before the evidence is rendered, before the facts are known, on the first blush of suspicion, they say, "Cut him off! cut him off!" Thus they cut off Dr. Pomroy before there was the slightest evidence of his guilt ; sentencing him on a day's suspicion ; while there, in their Cherokee Churches, they had abundant evidence that, not for a day, but for forty years, there has been sanctioned and sustained a system which is not only the mother of adultery, but of every other sin ; and yet the Prudential Committee, with marvellous consistency, cut loose their Secretary, but hold fast their slaveholders ! I have heard of a woman who was asked what she thought of the doctrine of total depravity, and who replied that it was "a very good doctrine if people would only *live up to it*" (laughter). Now, the Prudential Committee, of course, instruct their missionaries to preach the doctrine of total depravity ; the missionaries preach it, and are in that respect very orthodox and sound ; but, in justice to them, it must be also said that they not only preach, but practise it (laughter).

My friend, in one of his rapid incidental references, mentioned that "the opposing Society, the American Missionary Association, had been brought to deal with slave-hiring among their own missionaries." The fact is not exactly as Mr. Beecher stated it. There is in Siam an institution resembling slavery. A man is in debt and cannot pay ; he is held in bondage till he can : the worst way in the world to pay a debt ! I am willing to admit that this is slavery. Now, one of the missionaries of the new Society, the Rev. Dr. Bradley, employed in his service a man who was held in that kind of bondage for debt. But what then ? The other missionaries of the station immediately came together and said, "This is

hiring slaves, and we must discountenance it." So, by a unanimous vote, they disapproved his act, and sent the record of their disapproval to the Executive Committee at New York. Their resolution was commended by the Committee, who sent back explicit word to the missionaries never again to hire a man whose labor brought no reward to himself. But can Mr. Beecher, or can anybody else, tell me why it was that Dr. Bradley fell into the error of employing slave labor? I will tell you how it happened. Dr. Bradley had been newly received into the employment of the new Society, after having spent many years in the service of the American Board—and there is where he learned it! (Laughter.)

My friend said that the American Board had purged its missions from Caste. You know that caste among the Hindoos operates almost as slavery among us. Mr. Beecher had a right to speak of this freedom from caste as a credit to the Board. But how did the Board clear itself of caste? Rev. Mr. Winslow was the first man among the missionaries to attack it. He excommunicated seven members from his Church because of their adherence to caste. Tell me what that caste was! If a man of high caste was converted and came into the Church, and a man of low caste was converted and came into the Church, they preserved their caste inside, as they had preserved it outside, the Church; like the Jews and the Samaritans, they would have no dealings with each other. Mr. Winslow said to these men, "But you must sit and eat at the same communion-table, because you are all brethren in Christ"; and because they refused, one caste standing on one side of the wall and another on the other, *he excommunicated them.* And afterwards the Madura mission *excommunicated seventy-two members at one blow*, most of whom were catechists, or native teachers, because not one of them would come into a house and eat bread with another of a different caste! Now, I say, if the American Board regards the fact that one man will not eat bread with another in his own house such a sin that they must cut off seventy-two church-members for the offence, is it not high time that the Prudential

Committee should say, "As we have cut off these seventy-two members for refusing to eat bread together, shall we not the rather cut off seventeen members who, for forty years, have been stealing the labor of black men and selling their wives and children ?" For, am I unreasonable when I hold it to be a greater sin to enslave a man than to refuse to eat with him ?

My friend's allusion, therefore, to the Board as having freed itself from caste was a very unfortunate one for his argument ; for the only thing we ask of the American Board is to free itself from slavery, with as much zeal as it freed itself from caste, and in exactly the same way—by cutting off the offender. Does not consistency require it ? If the excision be needed in one case, is it not *more* needed in the other ?

The inquiry now arises, Why should we cut off our contributions from the Board just at the present time ? I will tell you why, and this was one reason why I brought this map. [Mr. Tilton here referred again to the map of Indian Territory.] You perceive that on the north of Indian Territory lies Kansas, on the east Missouri, and on the south Arkansas. Now, sir, at this very moment secret machinations are going on, between the Southern Missourians and the Cherokee leaders, to bring in the Cherokee nation as a new territory by itself, and of course as a slave Territory. You will see the geographical reason for this attempt. Missouri is to be free in a very few years (sagacious men on the ground say five years), not by emancipating her slaves, as many people at the East suppose, but by selling them to other masters. Now, if they sell them, whither shall they be taken ? Not to Kansas, for that is free ; not to Arkansas, for the people are too poor to pay a high price ; not to Texas, for that is too far away. There is no place, then, where Missouri can empty out her slaves unless the Indian country can be made into slave States. The first proposed slave State is the Cherokee district. Therefore the politicians want to make it certain that this intermediate ground shall be opened to slavery, on the firm foundation of State governments, and hence their machinations to

accomplish that object. Now, against these secret, political plottings, remember that there is no indoctrination of the gospel of liberty, no exertion of the moral power of the Church, no steady offsetting influence by the missionaries. How far has this game gone on? Mr. Sebastian, the other day, introduced a resolution into the Senate providing that the same laws and regulations which are usually given for the government of the territories be extended to the Cherokee nation; so that already the movement is on foot.

Now, sir, tell me how that beautiful country that lies north of the Cherokees was saved to freedom? [pointing to Kansas]. Mr. Beecher can tell! It was done by the rousing of the whole North to the necessity of making Kansas a free State. It was by the universal excitement created in the North that Kansas was saved. And how did we save it? I will tell you a story of a green bag. [Mr. Tilton here produced a green bag, which, on being opened, was found to contain a Sharp's rifle, which he held up to the audience.] I wish to remind Mr. Beecher how he helped to make Kansas a free State.

Mr. GARBETT—I rise to a point of order. The gentleman's remarks are not to the question. What relation has this rifle to the American Board?

Mr. TILTON—I will tell you! This instrument—well dented by long use—was dedicated by the pastor of this Church to the cause of freedom in Kansas.

Mr. GARBETT continued his interruption or the point of order, but was called to order by the chair.

Mr. TILTON—This was one of the original twenty-five rifles for which Mr. Beecher, during the Kansas excitement, went around among the members of his Church making personal solicitation and continual appeal to every one, saying, "Give me money to buy twenty-five rifles for Kansas." This rifle has performed its mission; it has seen good service there (applause).

A GENTLEMAN—Is it loaded? (Laughter.)

Mr. TILTON—No! (laughter)—only with an argument! I will not stop to tell you the history of this weapon; only that it was carried three months by Capt.

John Brown (applause and hisses). It was present at the battle of Osawatomie (loud applause followed by hisses and renewed applause).

The CHAIR—Gentlemen are provoking by their hisses the very thing they are trying to stop. I insist upon order.

Mr. TILTON—I will tell you the reason why I exhibit this weapon. When that territory (pointing to Kansas) was in danger of falling into the hands of the Slave Power, Mr. Beecher's heart was touched to such a degree that he went around among you all, and, by personal appeal, procured the money to purchase this rifle, which was sent, with two dozen others, to guard the liberties of the people of Kansas. But at this moment, sir, at this very moment, the Cherokee country is in the same peril of coming into the Union as a new slave Territory, and I come to Mr. Beecher and ask him to send—what? A rifle? No. But only the testimony of a strong word! I ask him to remember his heroic appeals of '56, and now, when there is no necessity for weapons of carnal warfare, now that the time has come when the shedding of blood is no longer required, I ask him only to send forth, in place of his Sharp's rifles, an easier and milder testimony, which will make glad again the hearts of those free men who made Kansas free! (Applause.)

Sir, I have done with the gun (laughter). But let me say a word in conclusion. My friend, Mr. Benedict, the merchant, in the early part of this debate, charged me with chasing one idea, as he said, "up hill and down dale." Well, sir, here [pointing to the Cherokee country] are hills and dales; and I know of one idea, sir, which I would chase up, and down, and over, and through these same hills and dales—an idea which I would chase through every cabin and hovel, through every cave and solitary place, through every forest and plantation; I mean, sir, the idea that this beautiful country shall ever be brought into the Union as a slave State! Yes, sir, I would chase it through every mission station, and every Church; I would chase it up and down everywhere, until it should be chased out even from the dingy Missionary House in

Pemberton Square ! I am not afraid of chasing one idea —particularly the idea that the American nation is to suffer the shame of a new slave State without a struggle to save itself against the encroachment, without an arousing of the North to this new peril of freedom, without the sounding of a trumpet to the American Board, invoking it to utter the voice of its missions against so great a crime, without an appeal to this Church, that once raised its strong right hand, armed like a warrior, to defend the freedom of Kansas, to lift up at least its solemn warning voice against the wrong of wicked men seizing a new, young State and leading it into the Union in chains !

Sir, if I ever chase one idea, I only say, let it be an idea which is worth chasing ! (Laughter.)

I tell you, friends and brethren, if the Cherokee nation is finally made a slave State, then, in the language of the covenant which the minister of this Church reads from his pulpit to every new-coming member on his profession of faith, "*This day and this hour will be everlasting witnesses against you*" ! But if this Territory be saved as a free State, then, as of old the very stones cried out when men held their peace, the corner-stone of its freedom will bear witness that it was laid this night in this Church !

Sir, the name of this Church, and of its minister, will go into history. Many men in many lands, lovers of their race and watchers of the progress of the age, are looking to this Church as fulfilling many noble and generous hopes. We are a marked Church ; this man is a marked minister. A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid. We are watched from afar—across the sea, and in foreign lands ! We are known everywhere as a Church that stands for the Rights of Men. I never have been in Europe, but I have been told that in the famous Church of St. Ouen, in one of the cities of France, if you look into the font you will see, reflected in the water, the whole grand architecture of pillar, and arch, and roof So, when the world looks into Plymouth Church, it sees reflected in the light of this single question its whole history, and character, and glory ! By and bye, when the long story of this great struggle comes to be written,

when the full record of these stormy times comes at last to be made up and completed, the question will be asked, "Where did this Church stand? where did its minister stand?" Ah, sir, if our answer to-night be not clear and true, we shall cast upon our fair fame a shadow and a cloud!

To-night there come to us from the prairies, through the long distance of a thousand miles, the piteous appeals of two thousand slaves in the land of the Cherokees to two thousand free men in Plymouth Church. They say to us to-night, "Brethren, we are in bonds; we have religious teachers among us who teach the strange religion that Christian men may hold us in unchristian bonds; we have heard of your Church, and of your minister; we have been told that you are the friends of the oppressed; we are in chains; we send you an appeal for liberty. Brethren, hear us, and loose us from our bonds!"

Men and women of Plymouth Church! This is the touching plea that comes to us at this hour! Hark! You can hear it at this moment, mingled with the sighings of the west wind! A plea that comes again, as once before, when we all listened and wept, from under the thatched roof of the cabin of Uncle Tom! What answer shall we send back to these petitioners? If you cast your vote to sustain this Missionary Board, to endorse its complicity with the enslavement of these Christian slaves, you say to every one of those dusky men and women who are now crying out to this Church, "Hush your plea! smother your cry! wear your chains!"

Are you willing to make such a record, while God stands looking down from Heaven to read it? In the name of justice, in the name of humanity—nay, sir, in the name of Christ's love, and for the sake of Christ's poor—I beseech you to stand with the oppressed against the oppressor! I pray God to give us wisdom, and justice, and courage!

[Mr. Tilton took his seat amid loud and long-continued applause.]